

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

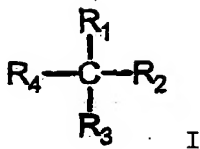
LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A process for coating cheeses, in particular pressed cheeses, wherein a coating composition is applied onto whole cheeses or portions of cheese, which coating composition comprises from 60% to 100% by weight of a product of esterification of at least one fatty acid and at least one polyol containing a branched chain having at least 3 carbon atoms and at least 2 OH groups.

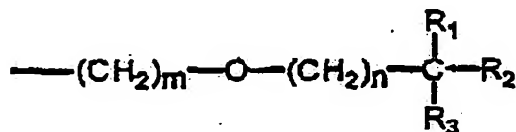
2. (original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyol comprises at least 5 carbon atoms and a saturated hydrocarbon-based chain.

3. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain comprises a neopentyl group.

4. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain corresponds to the general formula:



in which R_1 , R_2 , R_3 and R_4 , which may be identical or different, are selected from a C_1 - C_6 alkyl group, in particular a methyl or ethyl group, or a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group, in particular a hydroxymethyl group; or R_4 represents a group



m and n , which may be identical or different, being an integer from 1 to 6, advantageously 1 to 3, preferably equal to 1, R_1 , R_2 and R_3 being as defined above, provided that at least two from R_1 to R_4 are a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group.

5. (original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the polyol is selected from pentaerythritol, neopentyl glycol, trimethylolethane, trimethylolpropane and dipentaerythritol.

6. (original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fatty acids consist of at least one first fatty acid

of a group (A) and at least one fatty acid of a second group (B), the group (A) having a melting range at least 40°C higher than that of the group (B).

7. (original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the fatty acids (A) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having more than 12 carbon atoms.

8. (original) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the fatty acids (A) are selected from hydrogenated palm and rapeseed fatty acids, and are preferably behenic acid-rich erucic rapeseed oil fatty acids.

9. (original) The process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the fatty acids (B) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having from 1 to 12 carbon atoms.

10. (original) The process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the fatty acids (B) are selected from hydrogenated copra fatty acids, octanoic acid, decanoic acid and mixtures thereof.

11. (original) The process as claimed in claim 10, wherein the fatty acids (A) are present at 50 to 100% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids, and the fatty

acids (B) are present at 0 to 50% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids.

12. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the B/A molar ratio is between 0.8 and 1.5, preferably between 1 and 1.3.

13. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating comprises at least one polycarboxylic, in particular C₃-C₁₆ dicarboxylic, acid esterified with the polyol via one or two of its carboxylic functions.

14. (original) The process as claimed in claim 13, wherein the dicarboxylic acid is selected from sebacic acid, adipic acid, succinic acid, malic acid and oxalic acid, in a proportion of between 0 and 20% by weight, relative to the total weight of the coating.

15. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the alcohol function (of the polyol) to acid function (of the fatty acids and of the polycarboxylic acid) ratio is greater than 1, and advantageously between 1 and 2.

16. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 13, wherein the coating composition comprises from 0 to 20% by weight of polycarboxylic, in particular dicarboxylic, acid relative to the total weight of the coating composition.

17. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the coating composition contains a plasticizer compatible with foodstuffs, in particular a copolymer of butyl acrylate or butyl methacrylate and of ethylene, or a copolymer of vinyl acetate and of ethylene acetate.

18. (original) A coating composition for cheeses, comprising from 60 to 100% by weight of the product of esterification of a polyol containing a branched chain having at least 3 carbon atoms and at least 2 OH groups and

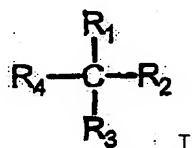
- of at least one fatty acid of a first group (A), and
- of at least one fatty acid of a second group (B),

these fatty acids of the group (A) having a melting range at least 40°C higher than that of the fatty acids of the group (B).

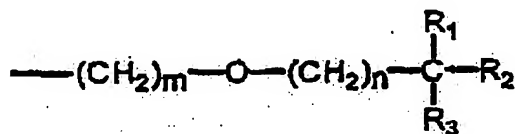
19. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the polyol comprises at least 5 carbon atoms and a saturated hydrocarbon-based chain.

20. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain comprises a neopentyl group.

21. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the polyol containing a branched chain corresponds to the general formula:



in which R_1 , R_2 , R_3 and R_4 , which may be identical or different, are selected from a C_1 - C_6 alkyl group or a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group; or R_4 represents a group



m and n , which may be identical or different, being an integer from 1 to 6, advantageously 1 to 3, preferably equal to 1, R_1 , R_2 and R_3 being as defined above, provided that at least two of R_1 to R_4 are a C_1 - C_6 hydroxyalkyl group.

22. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the polyol is selected from pentaerythritol, neopentyl

glycol, trimethylolethane, trimethylolpropane and dipentaerythritol.

23. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the fatty acids (A) are saturated or unsaturated fatty acids having more than 12 carbon atoms.

24. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 23, wherein the fatty acids (A) are selected from hydrogenated palm and rapeseed fatty acids, and are preferably behenic acid-rich rapeseed oil fatty acids.

25. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the acids (B) are saturated or unsaturated acids having from 1 to 12 carbon atoms.

26. (original) The composition as claimed in claim 25, wherein the carboxylic acids (B) are selected from hydrogenated copra fatty acids, octanoic acid, decanoic acid and mixtures thereof.

27. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein (A) is present at from 50 to 75% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids and (B) is

present at 50 to 100% by weight relative to the total weight of the fatty acids.

28. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the A/B molar ratio is between 0.8 and 1.5, preferably between 1 and 1.3.

29. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein it also comprises from 0 to 20%, advantageously from 3 to 10%, by weight of a polycarboxylic acid, in particular a dicarboxylic acid, especially a C₃-C₁₆ dicarboxylic acid, the dicarboxylic acid being present in free form and/or in a form esterified with the polyol.

30. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein the number of alcohol functions (of the polyol)/number of acid functions (of the fatty acids and of the polycarboxylic acid) ratio is greater than 1, advantageously between 1 and 2.

31. (previously presented) The composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein it also comprises from 0 to 20%, advantageously from 3 to 10%, by weight of a plasticizer compatible with foodstuffs, in particular a copolymer of butyl

acrylate or butyl methacrylate and of ethylene, or a copolymer of vinyl acetate and of ethylene acetate.

32. (previously presented) A process for preparing a coating composition as claimed in claim 18, wherein an esterification reaction is carried out between at least one polyol with at least one fatty acid of a first group (A) and at least one acid of a second group (B) and, optionally, at least one polycarboxylic, in particular dicarboxylic, acid and, optionally, a plasticizer compatible with foodstuffs, in particular a copolymer of butyl acrylate or butyl methacrylate and of ethylene, or a copolymer of vinyl acetate and of ethylene acetate, is added to the esterification product obtained.

33. (previously presented) A coated cheese comprising a coating obtained according to the process of claim 1.

34. (new) A cheese coated with the coating composition of claim 18.